

THE
**FUTURE
OF
AMERICA'S
NATIONAL
PARKS**

First Annual
Centennial Strategy for

Ocmulgee National Monument

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



Site: OCMU

Year: 2007

Vision Statement

Established in 1936, Ocmulgee National Monument preserves and interprets one of the longest periods of time of any National Park Service area. The park has a proven 12,000 year continuum from the arrival of the Paleo Indian people hunting Mammoths to the present day. The visible cultural resources are the mounds and other sites that date from the period of 900 to 1600 CE. In the 1930s the park was the location of one of the largest archeological digs in the country. Those excavations and others have left the park with one of the largest archeological collections in the Park Service numbering over 2.5 million items.

While the park is bordered by the city of Macon, Georgia it has a "rural" feel and provides an important recreation/contemplation area for the local residents. Working with partners we have linked up with the series of "Greenway" trails that run through the city and will expand both inside and outside the park in the future.

Ocmulgee is an area held sacred by many Native American Nations. It is considered "homeland" by the Muscogee (Creek) people. We partner and consult with 12 different Native American Tribes on the interpretation and preservation of these sacred areas. They also assist us with educating the public about their current cultures and helping to overcome the many stereotypes about Native People.

Our vision is to better educate the public on the importance and uniqueness of this cultural treasure. We will improve our museum and wayside exhibits to tell the whole story of this site. Working with our Native partners we will explain not just the pre European contact period but help the visitor understand the descendents of the people who lived here for 12,000 years. We will help the public understand that those descendants are still a vibrant and growing society who still retain and respect the traditions of their ancestors. Through these partnerships we will reach out to the school systems to improve the teachers understanding of what the park has to offer and how its fits into the curriculum thus encouraging their use of the park facilities.

The park has a remote unit, the Lamar site, that has had a lot of public interest but due to staffing/funding restrictions has never had much interpretation. The site plays an important part in the 12,000 year continuum and we hope to be able to provide the educational/interpretive opportunities the site needs.

Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager

James S. David

Site: OCMU

STEWARDSHIP

☒ **Assure that no compelling chapter in the American heritage experience remains untold and that strategically important landscapes are acquired, as authorized by Congress.**

☒ **Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)**

Through working with our various Native American partners we will tell the story of the people who were in this area for 12,000 years and what happened to them. These sacred lands will be preserved for future generations

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: OCMU

ENVIRONMENT

☒ **Engage partners, communities, and visitors in shared environmental stewardship.**

☒ **Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)**

Working with the City of Macon, Bibb County and various community groups and organizations we will reduce the trash coming into the park through storm water runoff. With those various organizations we will help educate the public in the importance of storm water control and other environmental issues that affect the park and the community

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Site: OCMU

RECREATION

☒ **Encourage collaboration among and assist park and recreation systems at every level-federal, regional, state, local-to help build an outdoor recreation network accessible to all Americans.**

☒ **Rehabilitate over 2,000 miles of trails within or connected to national parks, including trails accessible to those with disabilities.**

Working with the Student Conservation Association we will continue to improve the condition of the park's trails.

Working with park partners we will expand the network of trails within the park to link up with the "Ocmulgee Heritage Trail that is being developed in the City of Macon. The Heritage trail has developed a new interest in the Ocmulgee River and its condition. This linking up of the trails will provide recreation opportunities to the whole population including those with disabilities.

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Site: OCMU

RECREATION

☒ Expand partnerships with schools and boys and girls associations to show how national park experiences can improve children's lives.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

We will provide training for teachers on the park's resources and how to use them. A curriculum based CD with programming for Elementary, Middle and High School has been developed and will continue to be distributed.

With various partners and the involvement of the local Boards of Education we will continue to bring in Native Peoples to share their culture and overcome stereotypes. The Ocmulgee Indian Celebration is one of the most culturally diverse events in the city and gives students and the general public the chance to interact with and learn from the Native People.

Work with the neighborhood minority youth center to provide interpretive programming and improve the children's understanding of the importance and uniqueness of the parks resources which they walk by on a daily basis

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RECREATION

☒ Focus national, regional, and local tourism efforts to reach diverse audiences and young people and to attract visitors to lesser-known parks.

☒ Increase visitation by 25 percent at lesser-known parks through a national tourism effort aimed at helping people to discover the breadth of parks and experiences.

Continue partnerships with local Chamber of Commerce, Visitors Bureau other attractions to promote the park and its activities. Promote the Macon area as a tourism destination to increase visitation to all the area attractions. Reach out to minority populations to develop their interest in visiting their local National Park.

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EDUCATION

☒ Cooperate with educators to provide curriculum materials, high-quality programs, and park-based and online learning.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

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EDUCATION

☒ Promote life-long learning to connect generations through park experiences.

☒ Enroll an additional two million children in the Junior Ranger program.

The park has grade three levels of Junior Ranger booklets. We will improve the method we have of letting the visitor know they are available. This should increase the number of children participating

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☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Summer children's workshops provide a day long educational program for children ages 7 to 12. These hands-on activity driven programs encourage the children to get more involved and they express the desire to learn more. Many of those who started out coming to the workshops later signed up as volunteers for park programs.

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EDUCATION

☒ Impart to every American a sense of their citizen ownership of their national parks.

☒ Increase visitors' satisfaction, understanding, and appreciation of the parks they visit.

All park divisions work together to insure that the visitor enters a park which is well kept, has educational/interpretive programs that are of high quality and provides a quality recreational experience. Personnel are trained to insure they are able to provide quality of service to the public and the resource. Quality exhibits and programs will aid in insuring that the visitor understands the purpose of the park.

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Site: OCMU

PROFESSIONALISM

☒ Be one of the top 10 places to work in America.

☒ Meet 100 percent of diversity recruitment goals by employing people who reflect the face of America.

Continue recruitment in minority schools and neighborhoods to insure a diverse workforce. Current permanent staff is 60% minority.

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Site: OCMU

PROFESSIONALISM

☒ Promote a safety and health culture for all employees and visitors.

☒ Reduce the number of employee lost-time incidents and serious visitor injuries by 20 percent.

Foster a work environment in which safety is the forefront of all activities. Insure that all employees are properly trained in any equipment which they use and know what personal protective equipment is needed to perform the task. Insure that a safety discussion is a part of all staff/division meetings. Insure all employees understand that they are to be watching for any safety issues and know how to correct or get corrected any problems they find.

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PROFESSIONALISM

☒ Model what it means to work in partnership.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Continue to explore new partnerships while maintaining the numerous that are already in place. The park normally works with up to 10 different partners each year and many programs and activities would not be possible without those partnerships. This has meant over \$500,000 in direct or in-kind donations in one year. The Ocmulgee Indian Celebration is one of those programs that would not be possible without partnerships. This high quality cultural program is an important part of the park's interpretive program. These partnerships have helped increase the public's and local business's understanding and appreciation of the park's purpose.

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